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THE NATIONAL ERA.

WASHINGTON, MAY 13, 1850.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW.

A STORY OF THE ISLAND ESTATE.

BY MRS. EMMA D. SOUTHWORTH.

BOOK SECOND.

MRS. GENERAL STUART-GORDON AT HOME.

Oh, sweetly is bedecked her bower, and gorgeously her halls;
Here treads the foot on springing buds, and grace her velvet falls.
The fairy curtain's graceful flow, the vase, the jangling
warm,
Those household hold-objects, mirrors bright, revealing the fair
features;
Exotics that perfume the air with odors sweet and strange,
And shells that far in foreign climes old ocean wonders
range,
With countless gifts of taste and art, in classic beauty rife,
Are laid upon her homestead shrine, and grace her daily life.

C. Gilman.

It was autumn before the Stuart-Gordons returned to the Isle of Rays. It was impossible to tell which were the prouder—General Stuart-Gordon or his brilliant young bride, or Britannia of her grand old husband. She glowed in him; there is no error upon this subject—it is the fact. "And he glowed in her," said the old lady, "and he glowed in her presence—that is another truth. And the Isle of Rays itself glowed, sparkled, and scintillated more splendidly than ever, when illuminated by the presence of Britannia. As for Louise, you know she was a nunny, and as for Louise, she was a pale face; the island Palace was quite thrown away upon them. They might wander among the groves and arbors, with music and poetry, and such nonsense, all day, but the halls and saloons of the island Palace were alone fitted for our grand General Stuart-Gordon and our brilliant Britannia. Mrs. Armstrong might say as she pleased, but her downy-hearted little Louise never could have done 'the island Palace' for my part. I think each was well bestowed, and I sympathize with Brighty and the General—don't you? Mrs. General Stuart-Gordon came home in state, and astonished the neighborhood with many innovations. A new and splendid carriage was set up—five Arabian horses purchased—servants put in liveries—three white domestics engaged, namely, a Parisian girl as lady's maid, an English matron as housekeeper, and a French cook.

What was the harm of it? It was not extravagance. General Stuart-Gordon could well afford twice the expenditure. It made everybody happy, (except Mrs. Armstrong;) it gave people employment, and circulated idle money. As for the darkies, they were delighted with their new liveries as ever saw recruits with new uniforms, or baby boys with their first breeches.

The day succeeding the arrival, the two ladies were seated together in the luxurious boudoir of Britannia.

"In truth, my dear Louise, you could have done nothing with this establishment without me! You would never have thought of any improvements! You would have received no suggestion from the gentlemen of the family. Men are apt to be domestic matters—never think of refining their own comforts, while yet they keenly relish those comforts when quietly falling in their daily life. I admire keen and delicate tastes, as an evidence of perfect physical development, but I do not like to see a lofty mind always debased in the service of these senses. I would not have the General thinking always of his dinner, his lounge, and his chaise, though it gives me pleasure to see that he enjoys them, when, in the slipping off of the hours, they properly succeed physical or intellectual exertion."

Louise was pale, dispirited, disinclined to converse at all, still less to exult at anything Britannia might say or do.

"You are so positive, Louise—and you always are, even by the words of Louise. By the way, where is the young gentleman this morning?"

"Gone over to the Crags to see Miss Somerville. He seemed very anxious to meet her, and so he left me immediately after breakfast."

"I wish he would not go there," said Britannia, then, immediately repenting her hasty speech, she looked abruptly.

Louise looked at her with a slightly querulous expression upon her pretty features, and asked—

"Why, Britannia—why do you wish Louise would not go there?"

"My love, it is time to dress; some one will be calling here to-day, ring for Fleurie!"

"But, Brighty, why do you wish Louise would not call at the Crags?" persisted Louise, glancing keenly but fortivally at Britannia's face.

Mrs. Stuart-Gordon turned her eyes full upon the face of Louise, and, looking at her steadily, replied, slowly and gravely—

"Because Susan Somerville is a grief-stricken woman, and the visit of a gay young bridegroom may be unwelcome, as unsuitable."

Louise dropped her eyes beneath the steady, rebelling gaze, and sighed.

"Now, Mrs. Louise, will you please to dress for dinner?"

"Oh, Britannia, I will dress, but I want to see my mother so much!"

"The carriage is at your command, Mrs. Louise."

"Oh, Britannia, I cannot go alone! The General might not like it—Louise might not!"

"I hope there is not a negro on this plantation as great a slave as you are, Mrs. Louise. Why should they dislike it? Why should they stop you if they did? You pay a poor compliment to General and Mrs. Stuart-Gordon. If they disliked any act of yours, Louise, believe me, neither would think of imposing a single restraint upon your actions; and, indeed, I should very much dislike to see them make the attempt. Poor little thing, you have been confined and pestered so long, that you have lost the use of yourself. You are free! Can I not electrify you with the fact into some life! Pray use your freedom a little. Ring and order your carriage at your own house, and go—try it, to see how it will feel! Heaven, child! are you all torpor?"

"Yes! why don't you, swaggers, Louise! make a big fuss about the house—order the servants—make every body stand around you, or pitch over each other, in how f'd do it! How do you do, Brighty?" exclaimed the General, who had swooped suddenly down into this soft cushion's nest.

"How do you do, Miss Louise? I am pleased to receive you!"

"Dear Gertrude! what a surprise! We did not hear you come up!"

"How could you have me run up on those soft woolly carpets? Lord! I wouldn't live in this house for two General Stuart-Gordons! I couldn't make noise here, if you shouted, the sound would be smothered in satin and down. What a place!"

"Oh, Gertrude! I don't like the looks of the place; besides, I was just going over to the Crags to see poor, dear Susan, and I thought I would not pass you. I thought I would just run up and see you, Mrs. Stuart-Gordon."

"You put quite a surprise upon us," said Britannia.

"A shock, why don't you say? I spoke I ought to have said 'well! I never had patience to wait until a servant came to open the door, and a lady came in. I never indulged in Mrs. Armstrong—even her high-liftedness—in such notions. Oh! have you seen your mother, Louise?"

"Oh, no, dear Gertrude! I have not even seen her since I came home. I thought that that! How is she, Gertrude? Can you tell me?"

"Mrs. Armstrong keeps very close house—sees no one but the minister and the doctor."

"The doctor! Is my mother in bad health?"

"Well, as I do not think so, but having nothing else to amuse herself with, she thinks of nothing but her mother, and her own soul—which is the reason, I suppose."

"Oh, Brighty, you hear! My mother in bad health!"

"I do not believe it!" said Mrs. Stuart-Gordon.

"Well, good bye, good bye! I must go, I must go! I should mother in sweetest here!"

"Some love to roam of the wide sea foam,
Where the shrill wind whistles free,
But a chosen hand in a mountain land,
And a home in the woods for me!"

And, singing and shouting, she ran and bounded down the stairs and out of the house.

"Oh, Brighty! do you mark that! My mother in bad health!"

"I do not believe, Louise. Her minister and physician visit to amuse her, while they eat her heart out."

fatherly affection of General Stuart-Gordon, and in the friendship of Britannia and her young companions. Who could have foreseen the bright that fell upon her joy! The door opened, and Mrs. Armstrong saluted.

"She always saluted—her stately form, ample robes, and slow gliding step, forcibly suggesting the idea of a figure under full sail. Louise arose to meet her, but growing very weak, she sank again into her seat. Mrs. Armstrong approached, and offering her hand to Britannia, who rose respectfully to receive her, she said—

"I am happy to see you, Mrs. Stuart-Gordon. Permit me to offer you a seat, and wish for your happiness in your new position."

"Britannia curtsied, and said—'I hope you have been well since I had the pleasure of seeing you, Mrs. Armstrong.'"

"Quite well, I am much obliged to you. Your appearance saves me the necessity of inquiring after your health and leave me with the pleasure of congratulating you upon the subject." Then turning to Louise, she said—

"My dear mother!"

"They embraced—Louise sobbed.

"I cannot say the same for Mrs. Louise—she cannot say the same for Mrs. Armstrong, sitting down in her seat, and her own soul—which is the reason, I suppose."

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FROM IOWA.

PORT MADISON, April 1, 1850.
To the Editor of the National Era.

Enclosed I send you a call for a public meeting, which was held here last Saturday night, and which was held in response to the call, the meeting was held, and adopted resolutions and a preamble expressive of its views on the important subjects which it was convened to consider. The call is signed by men of all political parties, and is a fair expression of the people of this State on the questions at issue. The resolutions, &c., adopted at said meeting will be forwarded to you and our Senators and Representatives in Congress, as soon as possible, and will be read at meetings of a similar kind are called in other parts of the State, without any concert of action on our part; a meeting which will express almost the same views, was called, to be held at Keokuk, which was held here last Saturday night, and which was held in response to the call, the meeting was held, and adopted resolutions and a preamble expressive of its views on the important subjects which it was convened to consider. The call is signed by men of all political parties, and is a fair expression of the people of this State on the questions at issue. 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